

## Best Management Practices



# Corrugated Cardboard Recycling

*Why recycle? When you recycle you can: cut disposal costs; possibly create new revenue from the sale of recovered materials; and lessen your environmental impact by adopting sustainable practices. And recycling is not only good for the environment, it's also good for South Carolina's economy – providing more than 15,000 jobs and \$1.5 billion in annual personal income.*

Corrugated cardboard is one of the easiest, most valuable and sought after materials to recycle. Often, a business may generate new revenue by simply choosing to recycle cardboard or what the recycling industry calls Old Corrugated Cardboard (OCC). In addition, a business frequently sees a significant drop in disposal costs when it begins recycling OCC. Cardboard is bulky and takes up a lot of space in dumpsters.

Now that you've decided to recycle, here are some simple steps to start a recycling program.

### Gather the facts.

- Assess your waste.
  - Take a look in your stock room and dumpsters. How much cardboard do you throw away?
  - Can your business reuse corrugated cardboard boxes?
- Know the difference between corrugated cardboard and paperboard.
  - Corrugated cardboard has multilayer construction with a wavy middle layer.
  - Paperboard is the thin packaging that is used for cereal and other food products. Paperboard is considered a contaminant when mingled with corrugated cardboard.
  - Check with your recycler to find out how much, if any, paperboard is allowed.
- Find a market for your recyclables.
  - To find a recycler, visit [www.scdhec.gov/smartbusiness](http://www.scdhec.gov/smartbusiness) for market resources.

- Find out what levels of service and prices are available to you from different recyclers.
- For further assistance, contact your local solid waste department or call the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control's (DHEC) Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling (Office) at 1-800-768-7348. For additional information about recycling in your community, visit [www.scdhec.gov/recycle](http://www.scdhec.gov/recycle).

### Plan collection procedures.

- Containers
  - Determine the container size and type needed to collect your cardboard.
  - Determine how often you will need the container emptied. This, of course, will depend on the size of your container and how much cardboard you have.
  - Keep in mind that recycling does not increase the overall volume of waste, but simply requires separation. Once containers are separated, it may be that the remaining waste is minimal and can allow downsizing of trash cans, etc., to accommodate new storage demands for containers.
- Collection Locations
  - Depending on the size of your building, it's a good idea to have multiple, convenient areas where cardboard can be collected before it is placed in the container.
  - Make sure everyone knows where the container is located outside.

## Let everyone know.

### ■ Signage

- ❑ Post signs on the containers and around collection areas indicating what materials are acceptable and unacceptable.
- ❑ Use pictures whenever possible.

### ■ Employee Education

- ❑ Get the word out to all employees about the new recycling procedures. Send e-mails giving instructions on how to properly recycle cardboard.
- ❑ Mention the recycling program at staff meetings and keep employees informed of any changes and your success.

### ■ Custodial Staff

- ❑ It is very important to inform the custodial staff of these new procedures because they will most likely be responsible for some, if not all, of this process.
- ❑ Consider making customized signs to fit their needs.

## Collection Procedures

- Remove any packaging material and break down the boxes.

- ❑ It is important to flatten boxes before placing them in the container. You will fit much more cardboard in this way and most recyclers require it.

- **Keep it contaminant free.** Contaminants are items that should not be mixed with the corrugated cardboard.

- ❑ Common contaminants include: wax coatings; food; metal fasteners; shrink wrap; Styrofoam packing material; paperboard; and garbage.

- ❑ Check with your recycler for a complete list of contaminants.

- ❑ If it has been treated with plastic extrusions, wax coatings, etc., it can not be recycled unless it is marked with one of the recyclable certification symbols pictured on the right. These symbols indicate that the material has proven recyclable.



**Corrugated  
Recycles**



- **Should you invest in a compactor or baler?**

You may want to if you're recycling large amounts of cardboard. Cardboard in baled form usually yields higher market prices than its loose counterpart. Check with your recycler to see if this would be beneficial for your business.

## R<sup>2</sup>: Recycle and Report

It's smart business to recycle. It's also smart business to report your recycling activities. South Carolina has set a goal to recycle 35 percent of its municipal solid waste. Your numbers count and are needed to reach that goal.

Reporting is easy. **Keep track of what and how much you recycled.** You can keep your own records or your recycler may do it for you and report the information back to you. **Once you have the numbers, call your county recycling coordinator.**

For contact information on your county recycling coordinator, visit [www.scdhec.gov/recycle](http://www.scdhec.gov/recycle) and click on county programs or call DHEC's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling at 1-800-768-7348.

Reporting is done by fiscal year so you need to keep track of your recycling activities from July 1 to June 30. You should report your information to your county recycling coordinator after June 30 (the earlier the better). **Do your part. Recycle and report.**

## Recycling. It doesn't cost. It pays.

For more information regarding business recycling and waste reduction, call 1-800-768-7348 or visit [www.scdhec.gov/smartbusiness](http://www.scdhec.gov/smartbusiness).



*The South Carolina Smart Business Recycling Program is a partnership of the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control's Center for Waste Minimization, Small Business Environmental Assistance Program and Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling as well as the S.C. Department of Commerce's Recycling Market Development Program. The program provides a variety of services to help businesses reduce waste, recycle and develop sustainable practices.*

**South Carolina**  
Department of Commerce

Printed on **RECYCLED** Paper  
OR-0640 12/07